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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the cultural worldview perspective and coping styles of Puerto Rican females in the study. According to Hobfoll's "Conservation of Resources Theory," people strive to retain, protect, and build resources. Hobfoll's theory addresses some of the issues associated with the stress of living in different cultures concurrently. Latinas living in the continental United States are faced with choosing the optimum coping behaviors that will preserve their energies (resources) dealing with the socialization agents (mass media, printed language, education system, church, and governmental entities) of the host society. The thrust of the study approached the research from the perspective of the individual coping on a daily basis with an available repertoire of behaviors, having been transmitted through the various social models or significant others. Jackson's Cultural World View Inventory and Hobfoll's Strategic Adaptation Coping Sub Scales were the inventories of choice for this study. (Contains 37 references.) (Author)

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**“HOW SIGNIFICANT IS CULTURE in the DEVELOPMENT of COPING  
STYLES AMONG LATINAS?”**

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the cultural world view perspective and coping styles of Puerto Rican females in the study. According to Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory, "people strive to retain, protect, and build resources. What is threatening to them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources" (p.517).

Hobfoll's theory addresses some of the issues associated with the stress of living in different cultures concurrently. Latinas living in the Continental United States are faced with choosing the optimum coping behaviors that will preserve their energies (resources) dealing with the socialization agents (mass media, printed language, education system, church, and governmental entities) of the host society. The thrust of the study approached the research from the perspective of the individual coping on a daily basis with an available repertoire of behaviors, having been transmitted through the various social models or significant others (Bandura, 1971; Bandura & Walters, 1963). Jackson's Cultural World View Inventory and Hobfoll's Strategic Adaptation Coping Sub Scales were the inventories of choice for this study.

## Introduction

Clinicians and researchers working with clients have known of a connection between cultural factors in personality development and daily functioning (Okazaki & Sue, 1995). Recently, theoreticians have discussed the importance of world view and ethnic identity development as aspects influencing personality and functioning (Asante, 1989; Jackson & Sears, 1992; Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams, & Howley, 1991). The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between cultural perspective and the coping strategies of Puerto Rican women. Although recent decades have seen ongoing literature about Latinos (Comas-Diaz, 1987), it has been couched primarily in culturally deficit models (Cervantes & Acosta, 1992; Ridley, 1995; Sue, 1975). The area of concern for this researcher was that of (a) portraying Puerto Rican women from a culturally relevant perspective, and (b) determining the significance of culture in the evolution of their cognitive constructs or coping styles. This project utilized the Cultural World View Inventory (CWVI) developed by Jackson (1996) and the Strategic Adaptation Coping Subscales (SACS) developed by Hobfoll (1989).

Data was obtained from three sites: the Metropolitan area of San Juan Puerto Rico and two sites in Northeastern Ohio known for their Puerto Rican population.

In a study such as this, the inventories had to be translated in a culturally specific manner of Puerto Ricans with language nuances. The process of de-centering was utilized to achieve this objective.

Data revealed that women in all three sites reported a Latina world view that is consistent with the traditional customs and values of the Puerto Rican culture which endorses social joining, seeking social support, cautious action, avoidance, and indirect action as preferred coping behaviors. The Continental (U.S.) sample, in addition, endorsed assertive action as part of their repertoire of behaviors. This indicated some modified coping strategies as a result of the acculturation process, but Puerto Rican women essentially operated in the context of a Puerto Rican world view perspective.

## SUMMARY

The intention of this study was to investigate the existence of a relationship between the cultural world view and coping strategies of Puerto Rican females. According to Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory, "people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and what is threatening to them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources" (p.517). Latinas living in the Continental United States are faced with choosing the optimum coping behaviors that will preserve their energies (resources) dealing with the socialization agents (mass media, printed language, education system, church, and governmental entities) of the host society (Vander Zanden, 1990). The thrust of the study approached the research from the perspective of the individual on a daily basis with an available repertoire of behaviors, having been transmitted through the various social models or significant others (Bandura, 1971; Bandura & Walters, 1963).

Culture includes language, mores, vocational activities, familial customs, educational, and political practices shaped by the social models displayed via behavioral patterns in society. Within the context of the culture, the individual is exposed to the nuances of the particular societal group and receives the necessary messages conducive to adapting in the environment (Bandura & Walters, 1963). A

literature search did not identify any studies with respect to investigating the relationship between culture and coping in Latina women. The thrust of the investigation was identifying the cultural dimensions as discussed by Asante (1989) and Myers et al. (1991): relationship with the universe-harmony/mastery; relationship with others-collective/individual; perception of the universe-spiritual/material; logic-duinital/dichotomous; process-being/doing; time orientation-past/present-flexible/exact, and nature of knowledge-self/external. These dimensions were included in Jackson's Cultural World View Inventory, CWVI, Kent State, (1997) which was administered to the participants from Mainland Puerto Rico and two sites in Continental United States.

According to Jackson (1997), the Cultural World View Instrument assesses the person's endorsement of dimensions which are considered aspects of the individual's cultural development and personality. World view can be discussed as the mental map or conceptual framework the individual utilizes in the perception of his/her relationship to the world, nature, institutions, and other people (Bandura & Walters, 1961; Jackson & Meadows, 1991; Pedersen, 1994; Smith, 1991; Sue & Sue, 1990). The world view is related to a person's cultural upbringing and life experiences. It is the experience within social, cultural, environmental,

philosophical, and psychological dimensions (Jackson & Meadows, 1991; Myers et al., 1991; Pedersen, 1994). World views not only consist of attitudes, values, opinions, and concepts, but, also may affect how we think, make decisions, behave, and define events (Myers et al., 1991; Smith, 1991):

The CWVI utilized for scoring purposes, a Likert scale of one to five for each item: 12 of the 60 items were reversed scored. Each of the 60 items was assigned five possible responses from a number code such as: One represented the Eurocentric perspective (e.g., individuality and competitiveness) of the continuum, and five represented dimensions of the non- Eurocentric perspective (communal, harmony with nature) of the continuum. The higher the number score, in the CWVI, the more the individual reflected Latina traditions and values.

Hobfoll's Strategic Adaptation Sub Scales (SACS) utilized a scale of one to five for each item: four of the 52 items were reversed scored. Each item was assigned five possible responses with a number code. The SACS was scored by assigning a value of (one to 5), with one being at the lower end and five indicating the higher end indicating a relationship.

A relationship was found to exist between the cultural world view perspective and coping. In addition Hotelling's T tests were performed to



determine significance of individual scales in the cultural outlook of the women. As well, Hotelling's T tests were performed to determine significance of individual scales for coping.

The findings indicated that specific coping behaviors- assertive action, social joining, cautious action, avoidance, and indirect action were endorsed. The endorsed strategies revolved around the endorsement of items which promoted the concepts of respect, familism, adherence to social behaviors that promote harmony and pleasant social situations. The cultural dimensions were endorsed by both Mainland and Continental Puerto Rican women in the study.

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Figure Caption

Figure 1. Conceptualization of Coping Strategies Used by Puerto Rican Women.

## SOCIAL LEARNING (Bandura)



*WORLD VIEW* (Asante, 1989; Jackson, 1996)

Knowledge

Perception \* Logic

Relationship with the Universe

Relationship with Others \* Process \* Time



*VALUES* (Casas & Pytluk, 1995)

Simpatía \* Respeto \* Familismo



*COPING* (Hobfoll, 1989)

Assertive Action \* Social Joining \* Seeking Support

Cautious Action \* Indirect Action \* Avoidance

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